

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8442
INFO AMEMBASSY PANAMA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 5459

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP (CARTER, JIMMY)
SUBJ: POSSIBLE ATTENDANCE BY COLOMBIAN PRESIDENT- ELECT
AT PANAMA MEETINGS
N

REF: PANAMA 04067

1. WE WOULD BE SURPRISED IF PRESIDENT LOPEZ NOW INTENDS TO BRING THE "PRESIDENT-ELECT" WITH HIM TO PANAMA. GONZALEZ-REVILLA'S INFORMATION MAY BE BASED ON LOPEZ' VIEWS PRIOR TO THE JUNE 4 ELECTION, WHEN THE COMMON OPINION, AT LEAST AMONG LIBERALS, WAS THAT LIBERAL CANDIDATE TURBAY WOULD WIN A CLEAN VICTORY OVER HIS CONSERVATIVE OPPONENT BETNAUR. INSTEAD, TURBAY HOLDS ONLY A MODEST LEAD WHICH THE CONSERVATIVES ARE CONTESTING. THIS PROCESS WILL CONTINUE FOR WEEKS UNTIL THE ELCTORAL COURT PROCLAIMS THE OFFICIAL WINNER, WHICH IS CERTAIN TO BE AFTER THE PANAMA MEETING. IF, IN THE MEANTIME, BETANCUR WERE TO CONCEDE THE ELECTION, LOPEZ MIGHT BE ABLE TO BRING TURBAY WITH HIM WITHOUT RISKING CRITICISM OF HIMSELF AND TORRIJOS, WHO WOULD BE TURBAY'S HOST. BETANCUR IS NOT LIKELY TO DO SO, HOWEVER.

2. A SIMILAR CONSIDERATION REGARDING THE PROPRIETY OF A VIST BY TURBAY TO FOREIGN CHIEFS OF STATE DURING THIS POST ELECTORAL
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PERIOD MAY HAVE ARISEN IN CONNECTION WITH TURBAY'S INTENFED VIST TO VENEZUELA, WHERE HE WOULD HAVE MET WITH PRESIDENT PEREZ. TURBAY HAS POSTPONED THE VISIT, WHICH WAS PLANNED AND ANNOUNCED PRIOR TO THE ELECTION, IN ORDER, HE SAID, TO BE PRESENT IN COLOMBIA DURING THE PRESCRIBED BALLOT RECOUNT. USUALLY INFORMED SOURCES HAVE SPECULATED TO THE EMBASSY THAT PRESIDENT PEREZ MAY HIMSELF HAVE REQUESTED A POSTPONEMENT UNTIL TURBAY IS OFFICIALLY

DECLARED THE WINNER. IF PEREZ WERE TO MEET WITH TURBAY WHILE THE LATTER'S ELECTION VICTORY IS STILL IN QUESTION, ACCORDING TO THIS SPECULATION, PEREZ COULD BE CRITICIZED FOR INTERFERING IN COLOMBIA'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS. WE FEEL THAT TURBAY WILL PROBABLY POSTPONE HIS VISIT TO VENEZUELA UNTIL THE BALLOT RECOUNT PROCEDURE IS COMPLETED AND HE IS PROCLAIMED THE OFFICIAL WINNER BY THE ELECTORAL COURT, OR POSSIBLY SOMEWHAT EARLIER IF BETANCUR WERE TO CONCEDE.

DREXLER

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